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## ABSTRACT

The concepts of deliberate psychological education are utilized, together with use of the student personnel worker as a developmental instructor, to implement the developmental aims of higher education. A project is described involving the design, implementation, and evaluation of an interdisciplinary English-psychology course in which student personnel workers were the curriculum designers and instructors. It was hypothesized that students would move toward higher stages on Kohlberg's cognitive theory of moral development, and that self-reported attitudes toward women and women's issues would progress toward less traditional stances. Results revealed that students were able to learn and master subject matter, confront identity issues, and grow in cognitive moral reasoning. (KA)

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The need to focus on personal development as a primary aim of education has been advocated by many writers (Chickering, 1969; Heath, 1968; Sanford, 1967; Kohlberg, 1970; Mosher & Sprinthall, 1971). Mosher & Sprinthall (1971) have explicated the concept of deliberate psychological education as one approach to this aim. Sprinthall and his colleagues (Sprinthall, 1973; Sprinthall & Erickson, 1974; Erickson, 1975) have implemented these concepts in various public school projects.

Building upon the idea of deliberate psychological education, Widick, Kneflekamp, & Parker (1975) have described a role for counselors and student personnel workers as a developmental instructors in higher education. In this approach, the student personnel worker is a developmental specialist in the classroom. She is an expert both in concepts of student development and selected academic content. She teaches academic content and attempts to stimulate psychological development at the same time. Widick (1975) and Simpson (1976) have attempted to implement these concepts in university classrooms.

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This study is a report on a project which attempted to use the concepts of deliberate psychological education and the student personnel worker as a developmental instructor in order to implement the developmental aims of higher education. The project involved the design, implementation and evaluation of an interdisciplinary English-psychology course. Student personnel workers were the curricular designers and instructors. The course examined women both in literature and developmental psychology. It focused on their stereotypes, issues of identity, and development. It used Kohlberg's (1969, 1971) cognitive theory of moral development and Blocker and Shaffer's (1971) developmental

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counseling model as frames of reference for planning specific curricular components and processing classroom interactions. It was hypothesized that students, based upon the experimental English-psychology curriculum and instructional method, would move toward higher stages on Kohlberg's cognitive theory of moral development, and that self-reported attitudes toward women and women's issues would progress toward less traditional stances.

## METHOD

### Subjects

The subject sample in this study was undergraduates from The Ohio State University who registered for the interdisciplinary course, Spring Quarter, 1976. The course, entitled "The Awakening Woman: Psychological Themes of Identity, Development, and Liberation through Literature", was listed as a regular course both in the College of Education and in women's studies. Only women enrolled.

Since only one section of the course was offered, the sample was limited by student self-selection and a ceiling of 20 students. In fact, there were 14 students who enrolled for the course. Of those 14 students, there were seven freshmen, three sophomores, two juniors, and two seniors. There were 12 students in the 18 to 21 age range. One student was 23 years old, and one was 30 years old. Although the nature of such sample selection was limited by a lack of randomness and class size, the method parallels the typical class registration process in most colleges and, hence allows for limited generalization on that basis.

### Instructional Staff

The instructional team consisted of two graduate students in an M. A.

program in Student Personnel Work. One student, a first year student, worked in a graduate women's residence hall and had an undergraduate degree in literature and graduate study in comparative literature. The second instructor, a second year student, was employed as an intern at the University's counseling center and also had an undergraduate English literature degree. Both instructors were familiar with and had experience in the use of experiential/laboratory education, group dynamics, didactic instructional methods, and Kohlberg's theory and methods. Supervision was provided by two professors in the Student Personnel Work program.

### Design

The experimental design, classified as quasi-experimental by Campbell and Stanley (1963), was a One Group Pretest/Posttest design. This can be graphically represented as follows:

$O_1 \quad . \quad X \quad . \quad O_2$

An X represents the exposure of a group to an experimental variable or event, the effects of which are to be measured; O refers to some process of observation or measurement; the Xs and Os in a given row are applied to the same specific persons; and the left-to-right dimension indicates the temporal order.

In this study the treatment consisted of exposure to the experimental curriculum. The observations were measures of psychological growth as determined by Rest's (1974, 1975) Defining Issues Test and attitudes towards women as measured by the Spence-Helmreich (1973) instrument.

### The Curriculum and Its Design

The experimental class was taught in four instructional phases corresponding to the integrating elements proposed by Blocker and Shaffer (1971). They are:

- 1) establish relationships,
- 2) develop communications,

3) restructure cognitions, and

4) change overt behaviors.

This model was used because it is logically compatible with the objectives of the course, which focused on restructuring ways of reasoning about moral dilemmas and experimenting with new behaviors. It was also logically compatible with Kohlberg's methods of moral education (Hersh & Mentkowski, 1975), and it had been used successfully in other deliberate psychological education curricula with college students. (Widick, 1975).

The class also was designed to reflect Kohlberg's (1969, 1971) psychological model of change, stage theory of moral reasoning, and methods of moral education. The model of change is grounded in exposure to cognitive conflict, to contradictions and inadequacies in one's reasoning about moral situations. Cognitive conflict is produced when the structure of a student's environment interacts with and challenges the structures of the student's reasoning. Internal imbalance or disequilibrium results. It is theorized that persons operate to establish equilibrium through either altering the structure used to reason about moral issues to a qualitatively different level or stage, or retreating or fixating at a particular stage.

Kohlberg believes restructuring is stimulated if the environment's challenge is one stage (+1) above the person's stage of reasoning. This is the key to his methods of moral education. He and his associates (Rest, 1968; Rest, Turiel, and Kohlberg, 1969) found that students understand but reject examples of thinking lower than their own, fail to comprehend examples more than one stage above their own, and prefer reasoning one stage above their existing level. Instructors/facilitators, therefore, need to know the stage characteristics of Kohlberg's theory,<sup>1</sup> be able to assess a student's level of thought, and then stimulate

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<sup>1</sup>The characteristics of Kohlberg's theory are discussed in most of his articles. See Kohlberg (1969, 1971) for details.

development by creating an environment which is +1 in stage characteristics. The methods for creating +1 environment include (Kohlberg, 1971, p. 188-195): (a) role-taking and role-playing--in a classroom opportunities to assume roles such as teacher or discussion leader and opportunities to actively role-play a dilemma faced by a set of characters in a selection of literature can provide upending +1 environments; (b) diversity of levels of reasoning--a classroom made of persons with diverse backgrounds and points of view and curricular materials which introduce diverse viewpoints can stimulate students' perspectives; (c) "just" classroom structures--the structures through which instructors handle their classes need to reflect role taking, joint student-instructor decision making and other participatory activities and to do so +1 for the majority of the class in order to be influential on development; (d) focus on reasoning--in classroom activities such as discussions, role playing, and lecturing, the focus should be kept on "reasoning", as opposed to "feelings" or "behavior", in order to identify inadequacies in reasoning structures and to present +1 alternatives.

The four phases of Blocker and Shaffer, the theory and educational methods of Kohlberg, and the English and psychological content were combined as follows:<sup>2</sup>

Phases I and II

These phases attempted to build acquaintanceships, communications and trust relationships within the class, and to introduce the topics of women's sex roles and stereotypes. Activity in phase I was centered on an acquaintance-ship structured experience which emphasized taking the role of sister classmates

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<sup>2</sup>Detailed descriptions of the phases of the course including the literature, classroom activities, journals, examinations, and support group are available from the authors.

and another structured group experience which focused on negotiating the proposed course syllabus with the instructors. In phase II, the curriculum content and activities included the introduction and implementation of a bi-weekly discussion/support group, a sex role stereotyping structured group experience, viewing and discussing the film Growing Up Female, reading and discussing Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen by Alix Kates Shulman, and a values clarification experience focusing on sex roles of women.

Kohlberg's theory was implemented in these activities through role-taking and processing, negotiating classroom structures, keeping the discussions focused on "reasoning" processes, and introducing diversified opinion on women's sex roles.

### Phase III

This phase attempted to restructure cognitions. The curriculum content of phase III was divided into five sections:

1. Mary Anne Ferguson's collection of short stories in Images of Women in Literature and Edward Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, were used in this section to continue the examination of stereotypical images of women. Discussion and role playing activities focused on the dilemmas of the women portrayed in the literature. The point of view of the women and also all central characters in the dilemmas were examined in discussions and role playing activities. Alternatives were explored and role played. Since the short stories and play tended to portray the female characters in conventional levels of reasoning (stages 3 & 4), the instructors promoted the students' exploration and awareness of alternatives by attempting to interpose statements one stage above the predominant level and reinforcing student discussion in a similar manner.
2. The introduction of the psychological content into the curriculum focused on Kohlberg (1972), and Chickering (1969). In order for the student to better

comprehend and internalize the psychological theories, field interviewing assignments were given. Students interviewed women across the generation span. The interviews focused on the women's reasoning process concerning the personal and moral dilemmas in their lives. After the interviews, the student rated each interviewee according to stage theory and classified and compared their identity issues.

3. The literary content of this section focused on novels, plays, and short stories that dealt with female development--that is, female characters who were portrayed as developing personally during the play or novel. Literature selections included: Jane Howards' A Different Women, Ibsen's A Doll's House, and Sophocles' Antigone. Discussions focused on (a) the conflicts/dilemmas the female characters faced in their process of development and their resolution; (b) how the female characters reasoned about their dilemmas; (c) how other central characters viewed the major female character and reasoned about her dilemma; and (d) the reasoning of the students in the class on the dilemmas and conflicts. Questions and exercises dealing with, "If I were that women, what would I do?" and more importantly, "Why?" were emphasized.

4. The student journal was a means for self dialogue and "i" instructor feedback. Guidelines for the journal encouraged the individual student to record awarenesses of the issues raised by the assigned readings, class discussions, and structured exercises. Journals were collected three times during the quarter and written comments by the instructors attempted to raise +1 alternatives.

5. The discussion/support group was built into the curriculum as an optional two hours experience every other week. In these sessions, students brought up personal issues, conflicts, and questions concerning their roles as women. The two instructors and a third trained supervisor facilitated the group.

Kohlberg's concepts were implemented through numerous role-taking and role playing activities, readings and discussions, written journal feedback, and field interviewing--all of which emphasized reasoning processes and cognitive conflict. Throughout this entire phase, attempts were made to expose "+1" reasoning through the instructors' remarks, responses, and questions.

#### Phase IV

The instructional focus in this phase was on changing behaviors. This focus was implemented through the final examination which included a behavioral contract for experimenting with new behaviors, and the support group, where experimentation with new behavior was encouraged and supported.

In this last phase, the literature emphasized the difficulties and choices in coming to terms with identity and development. Margaret Atwood's Surfacing was discussed in detail, and the past, present, and future choices of the women in the class were processed in a structured group experience.

#### Dependent Variables

It was hypothesized that the curriculum would affect the moral cognitive development and attitudes towards women's issues of the students in the class.

Moral cognitive development was operationalized as scores on the Defining Issues Test (Rest, 1974) using pretest and posttest.

The DIT gives scores for each Kohlberg stage and a "Principled" or (P) score which is the sum of the weighted ranks given to stage 5A, 5B, and 6 items. So far, the P score has been the most useful index from the DIT (Rest, 1974). It is interpreted as the "relative importance attributed to principled moral considerations" in responding to the dilemmas on the DIT.

The DIT also has an "A" score, intended to typify an anti-establishment orientation or the transition phase between conventional and principled thinking (Kohlberg's  $4\frac{1}{2}$ ), and an "M" score, representing meaningless abstractions which

do not reflect any stage characteristic. Although the significance of the M score is problematic, a high M score serves as a caution in interpreting a subject's data.

The second major dependent variable, attitudes towards women, was operationalized as the measurement of the pretest/posttest scores on Spence-Helmreich's Attitudes Toward Women Scale (1973).

This instrument gives scores on attitudes toward women on topics such as vocational, educational, and intellectual roles for women, on freedom and independence, dating, courtship and etiquette, sexual behavior, and marital relationships and obligations.

#### Statistical Procedures

Statistical procedures used for analyzing data included correlated t-tests on the experimental group's pre and post scores on Rest's Defining Issues Test and the Spence-Helmreich's Attitudes Toward Women Scale.

As Rest (1975, p. 742, Note 3) has indicated, however, the multiple use of the t statistic is not completely appropriate in the case of the DIT stage scores. Stage scores are computed on ranking data and are not independent of each other in that if one stage is ranked higher than another, then the other stage has to be lower. As a consequence, another strategy for analyzing data advocated by Rest was also used in this study. This method characterizes changes in individual subjects by indicating which stage scores significantly increased and which decreased using the estimated standard error of the measure in order to have confidence that the change is not due to chance or instrumental error. (Rest, 1975, p. 743-744). The formula  $S\sqrt{1 - r^2}$  was used, where  $r$  was the correlation of a stage score between pre and post testing and  $S$  was the standard deviation of the score at the pre-testing. (Rest, 1975, Note 7, p. 744).

## RESULTS

The following questions were addressed: 1) Did the average P score of the DIT for the 14 subjects increase significantly?; 2) Did the average Spence-Helmreich Scale test score increase significantly?; 3) What was the distribution of scores on the DIT stages, and how did the distributions change over the quarter for the group and for individuals?

In Table 1 the results for questions one and two for the DIT and Spence-Helmreich Scale are summarized. On the DIT the group as a whole (14 subjects) showed significant increases on the higher stages (the P score, stages 5 and 6), matched pairs  $t(13) = 2.97$ ,  $p < .05$ . There was also a significant decrease for the group on stage 3, matched pairs  $t(13) = 2.43$ ,  $p < .05$ , and a significant increase in stage 5A, matched pairs  $t(13) = 2.11$ ,  $p < .05$ . Also, the Spence-Helmreich Scale showed significant increases, matched pairs  $t(13) = 2.86$ ,  $p < .05$

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Insert Table 1 here

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An examination of stage shifts is presented in Figure 1, which shows the group's distribution of responses over all the stages both for pretest and posttest.

The group's movement is both within conventional thinking and from conventional to principled reasoning. There was a large increase in stage 5A and a large decrease in stage 3. There seemed to be, therefore, both 3 - 4 and 4 - 5 shifts taking place within the group.

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Insert Figure 1 here

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Table 1  
Results of T - Test on Stage Levels, P Score,  
and Spence Scale

| Variable <sup>a</sup> | Mean  | Standard<br>Deviation | t Value |
|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------|---------|
| Stage levels          |       |                       |         |
| Stage 2               |       |                       |         |
| pre                   | 5.93  | 4.50                  | 1.98    |
| post                  | 3.93  | 5.03                  |         |
| Stage 3               |       |                       |         |
| pre                   | 9.21  | 5.67                  | *2.43   |
| post                  | 6.85  | 3.70                  |         |
| Stage 4               |       |                       |         |
| pre                   | 16.57 | 6.75                  | .83     |
| post                  | 14.50 | 9.68                  |         |
| A Score               |       |                       |         |
| pre                   | 3.50  | 3.22                  | .33     |
| post                  | 3.07  | 3.93                  |         |
| Stage 5A              |       |                       |         |
| pre                   | 14.93 | 7.03                  | *2.11   |
| post                  | 18.28 | 6.55                  |         |
| Stage 5B              |       |                       |         |
| pre                   | 4.28  | 2.90                  | 1.05    |
| post                  | 5.35  | 4.10                  |         |

Table 1 (cont.)

| Variable <sup>a</sup> | Mean   | Standard<br>Deviation | t Value |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------|---------|
| Stage levels          |        |                       |         |
| Stage 6               |        |                       |         |
| pre                   | 2.78   | 2.77                  | .85     |
| post                  | 3.42   | 2.62                  |         |
| M Score               |        |                       |         |
| pre                   | 2.78   | 2.19                  | 1.87    |
| post                  | 4.57   | 3.13                  |         |
| P Score               |        |                       |         |
| pre                   | 22.00  | 9.40                  | *2.97   |
| post                  | 27.07  | 9.11                  |         |
| Spence Scale          |        |                       |         |
| Spence Scale          |        |                       |         |
| pre                   | 128.43 | 18.52                 | *2.86   |
| post                  | 137.71 | 17.37                 |         |

Note. d.f. = 13

<sup>a</sup> $\bar{n}$  = 14.

\* $p < .05$ .

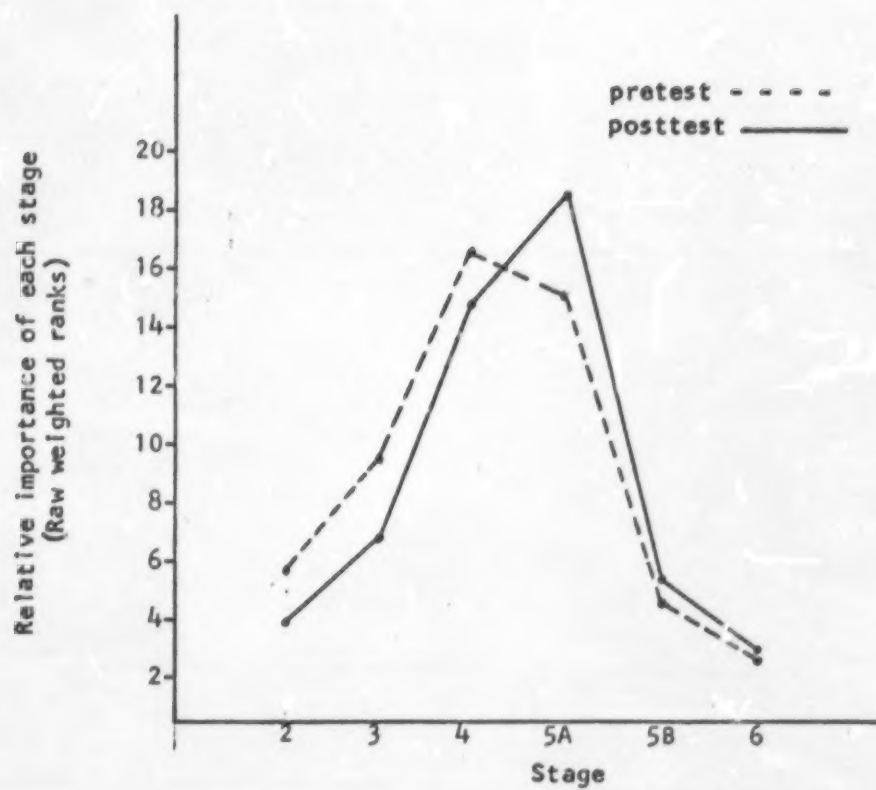


Figure 1. Pretest and posttest changes in students.

The group data does not address the question of step-by-step movement by individuals. This question requires an analysis of each subject's pattern of change. One method is to examine the P score at pretest and posttest. There were 10 of 14 subjects (72%) who did show increases on the P score. The P score, however, does not reflect shifts in individual stages. For example, it does not reflect shifts within conventional reasoning (the stage 3 to 4 shift) or between conventional and postconventional reasoning (the stage 4 to 5 shift). It also does not indicate stage decreases while the P score increases.

As a result, Rest (1974, 1975) has suggested another method for characterizing changes in individuals. Rest (1975, p. 743) believes the current instruments of moral judgment, including the DIT, are not completely reliable, and some error exists in every score. As a consequence, any change in a stage score must exceed the estimated standard error of the measure in order to have confidence that the difference in scores represents a real developmental change in a subject. Accordingly, Rest recommends that the standard error of each stage be calculated from the pretest-posttest correlations obtained from the experimental group. In this study for stage 2, the difference between the pretesting and posttesting had to exceed 3 points to be considered real change; for stage 3, the difference had to be at least 4 points; for stage 4, the difference had to be at least 6 points. Of the 14 subjects, 12 had at least one stage score whose change exceeded the estimated standard error. There were 10 different patterns of gains and losses in stage scores. Table 3 shows each one of these: P/4,3 for instance, means that the subject had an increase on the P score of at least 6 points, a decrease on stage 4 of at least 6 points, a decrease on stage 3 of at least 4 points, and that the other changes on the stage scores were below the estimated standard errors of the measure.

Table 2  
Individual Change Patterns

| Pattern of Change<br>Stages with gains/<br>Stages with losses | Total no. of<br>subjects with pattern | Subjects<br>pretest stage |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Upward change patterns ( $\underline{n} = 10$ )               |                                       |                           |
| P/4                                                           | 1                                     | 4                         |
| P/4,3                                                         | 2                                     | 3, non-type               |
| P/4,2                                                         | 1                                     | A                         |
| P/2                                                           | 2                                     | 2, non-type               |
| P, 4/3                                                        | 1                                     | H                         |
| 4/2                                                           | 1                                     | 2                         |
| --/4,3                                                        | 1                                     | 2                         |
| --/2                                                          | 1                                     | 6                         |
| Downward change patterns ( $\underline{n} = 1$ )              |                                       |                           |
| 4/P                                                           | 1                                     | A                         |
| Bidirectional change patterns ( $\underline{n} = 1$ )         |                                       |                           |
| P,2/3                                                         | 1                                     | 3                         |

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Insert Table 2 here  
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The change patterns are grouped in terms of patterns that show upward and downward change. A change pattern is considered to have upward movement if gains of higher stages were made at the expense of lower stages. Ten subjects (72% of the sample) showed upward change. A change pattern is considered to have downward movement if gains in lower stages were made at the expense of higher stages. One subject (7%) had downward movement, and one (7%) had a bidirectional pattern. There were two subjects with no significant changes, or 15% of the sample. In summary, upward change and no change are consistent with developmental theory, and in this study they accounted for 86% of the change patterns. Downward and bidirectional change are inconsistent with developmental theory, accounting for 14% of the patterns.

#### DISCUSSION

This study lends additional evidence to the validity of using developmental curricula in literature and psychology. The students in the class were able to learn and master subject matter, confront identity issues, and grow in cognitive moral reasoning. The instructors researched the identity issues of college women, and then jointly with their supervisors designed the classroom experiences so that they reflected those issues as well as Blocker and Shaffer's developmental sequences and Kohlberg's theory, model of developmental change, and methods of intervention. The instructors paid careful attention to their instructional method while in the classroom. They attempted to teach "in-treatment" and care was taken to audio tape each session and to monitor selected sessions in order to assess subjects and to make corrections in teaching methods.

This was a field study, however. Random selection of subjects into the course and use of comparison groups were not possible, given the self-registration system of the institution. Thus, strict controls on the effects of history, maturation, testing, and the interaction of the course and testing were not possible. Generalization is limited. There is a need to compare developmental curricula with traditional classroom instruction and designs, and to do so with as many controls as field contexts permit.

This study also lends additional evidence to the position that it is possible for student personnel workers to perform in new roles. The student personnel workers in this study helped design a developmental curriculum which linked a developmental model, curricular content, and a particular theory of cognitive moral development. The course was approved and taught through the regular channels of the University. The course was studied in order to evaluate its results, improve its quality, and contribute to a dialogue between theory and practice. (Rodgers, 1976).

Thirdly, this study has implications for promoting the development of college women. The women in this study showed developmental changes in the way they judged issues on the moral dilemmas in the DIT. Some of the women seemed to be moving within conventional reasoning (the 3 to 4 shift) and others were moving from conventional toward principled reasoning about morality (Kohlberg's stage 4 to 5). The women also showed increases in their awareness of women's issues and decreases in traditional attitudes toward women. Thus, the study sheds some light both the developmental levels of college women and the stimulation of their cognitive, moral development and awareness of women's issues.

Finally, this study has implications for the theoretical question of the nature of directional change in cognitive developmental theory. Kohlberg

(1973, 1971) claims moral development is unidirectional in a step-by-step sequence. That is, moral stages of reasoning develop in a rigid sequential fashion, without regression. Rest (1975) argues that this is not the case. Rest claims that some of Kohlberg's data as well as data from studies by Kramer (1968), Holstein (1973), and Rest's own work do not support Kohlberg's claim. Rest reports that Kohlberg's, Kramer's, and Holstein's longitudinal data show about 50% of the subjects moved upward (about 25% of which moved up one stage), while 50% did not. In Rest's (1975) longitudinal study, 66% of one sample (high school and early college) and 52% of another sample (junior high school) showed upward movement, while 12% of the high school group and 5% of the junior high group showed downward movement (regression). Others in both samples had ambiguous (14%) or bidirectional (8%) change patterns. Hence, Rest concludes there is evidence to support an upward trend, but no evidence for rigid "step-by-step" progressions. It may be more appropriate to talk about shifts in distribution of responses, that is, increases in higher stages, decreases in lower stages, and patterns that may be ambiguous or bidirectional.

It could be argued, however, that the DIT, being an instrument where subjects recognize rationales rather than create them spontaneously as in Kohlberg's method of assessment, may always illicit greater diversity of scores and patterns of distribution than Kohlberg's method. It is possible, therefore, that the "shifts in distribution of responses" interpretation could be a characteristic of the DIT, and a less accurate description of development than Kohlberg's interpretation. On the other hand, if Rest is correct in his conclusion that even the longitudinal data of Kohlberg and others who have used his method of assessment fit the "shifting distribution of responses" interpretation better than the "step-by-step progression" characterization, then this argument is not crucial. It may be accurate that the DIT illicit a broader diversity of

of responses and response patterns than Kohlberg's method. In doing so, it may also convey, as Rest argues (1975, p. 747), a more accurate picture of a subject's ability to discriminate and appreciate principled thinking and perhaps a more accurate characterization of the complexity of directional change.

This study supports the Rest interpretation. The patterns did not picture sudden step-by-step changes but rather upward shifts in distributions of responses (in several kinds of patterns) or downward and bidirectional shifts (for one person each). The percentage of upward shifts in this study, however, were higher than those reported by Rest, Holstein, Kramer, or Kohlberg. There were 72% of the subjects in this study showing upward shifts, while Rest reports 52% and 66% for his samples (over 2 years and no special treatment) and 50% for the combined longitudinal data of Holstein, Kramer, and Kohlberg. In addition, the increases in P score for subjects in this study (5.1 points) is comparable with two other "deliberate psychological education" courses reported by Rest (1975, p. 746-747) where the gains were 5.6 and 5.0 points over 12 weeks. In contrast, two comparison groups in one of these studies averaged 2.75 and 3.52 points without special courses, and in the other, the gain of the non-treatment comparison class was only .5 points over 12 weeks (Rest, 1975, p. 746-747). Hence, there seems to be evidence that the intervention in this study was influential in stimulating development.

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